

Taking the terror out of technological terminology

Karen L. Giesler

Center for Creative Learning, 265 Old State Road, Ellisville, MO 63021
telephone: 636-207-2579; fax: 636-207-2584; e-mail: cct07@rockwood.k12.mo.us

Abstract: Abstract concepts can challenge the most confident and able students. Add the technology specific terminology used to describe these concepts and one can have a recipe for frustration and failure. This paper discusses the creative techniques used by a primary grades teacher that allow students to communicate like laser professionals.

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Learning science is an active process. Learning science is something students do, not something that is done to them. In learning science, students describe objects and events, ask questions, acquire knowledge, construct explanations of natural phenomena, test those explanations in many different ways, and communicate their ideas to others. But how can this be accomplished when concepts and the terminology that describes them are abstract and advanced beyond the students' grade level? Subject-specific vocabulary can be complex and intimidating, especially for young learners. Trade books are valuable resources but do not always address exciting new technologies or provide information at the primary level. Imaginative teachers can incorporate creative grade level appropriate activities to resolve this dilemma. Familiar methods such as fortunetellers, student created dramatic demonstrations, comics, poetry, and picture books can be adapted to provide new, meaningful, and fun approaches to concept and vocabulary development. The techniques described may be used to introduce terminology as well as reinforce and assess student understanding. This approach to concept and vocabulary development results in students who use advanced subject-specific terminology fluently and appropriately when communicating.